

To: Mayor Chuck Reed
From: Public Safety Subcommittee, Mayor Reed Transition Committee
Date: January 8, 2007
Subject: Final Recommendations

Committee Members:

Jose Salcido, Chair
Steve Borkenhagen
Kathleen Flynn
Bobby Lopez
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Recommendations:

Create a Task Force to oversee the policies of the Downtown, ensuring the safety and enjoyment of patrons and police. The Committee recommends:

- The hard closing of downtown bars and nightclubs should be replaced with a gradual closing. Allow bars, clubs, and restaurants to stay open until 3am. They would stop serving alcohol at 1:30am, clear all drinks off the bar at 2:00am, and allow non-alcoholic drinks and food until 3am.
- Prioritize the enforcement of ABC laws and increase penalties for business owners who habitually violate these laws.
- Establish a continual re-evaluation of police policies and tactics in the handling of late night crowds until an appropriate resolution is met, striking a healthy balance with business needs and public safety.
- Include additional training for police officers who work the Downtown area so that they are better equipped to handle the large crowds.
- Look into reinstituting pay jobs for police officers, where bars and clubs pay to have an officer assigned specifically to their business. This works better for both the business owner and the officer. The fee should be paid to the city and not directly to the officer so that there is no question of impropriety.

The City should convert the Mayor's Gang Task Force into an agency for all jurisdictions to give it more power and increase public involvement. The Committee recommends:

- San José needs more accurate statistics on Gang, Gang Membership and Gang Activity. Teachers and other school officials, patrol officers, probation officers, jail classification programs, VCET, and Juvenile Hall should all be included in the gathering of gang information.
- Support of a new initiative to publicize records regarding gang members who have been required to register their name and address with the San José Police Department. The public and parents have a right to know about violent gang members who live in our community.
- Greater funding is needed for Community based Youth Organizations to identify and prevent the next generation of gang members. Gang life is a cycle, and for many gang members it is a family cycle. To break this cycle, special attention should be given to children who have relatives in gangs.
- Reinstate Gang Injunctions to stop street gang intimidation and activities by preventing particular gang members from loitering on neighborhood streets, corners, parks, and other public places. Using Project Crackdown will be an important tool for this action.
- Closer coordination with County Probation and State Parole by our Police Department will lead to better enforcement of the probation and parole conditions. This will allow for greater monitoring of gang members who have been paroled from prison.

The City needs to invest in the men and women who keep the streets safe for the citizens of San José. The Committee recommends:

- Make the Police and Fire Department the first priority in any budget discussion.
- Funding a larger administrative and training center for the Fire Department in place of the current building which is too small. The Old City Hall would be a great location for this. Training should also be held for community based organizations such as SNI and neighborhood associations.
- Increase the police staff including IT personnel to assist the Police in effectively using computer programs. This will increase communication and streamline the administrative work that needs to be completed, allowing more time for officers to be on patrol.

Background

San José has a problem with Downtown crowds leaving the bars and clubs at closing time. San José needs a new policy that will solve both the needs of police, patrons, and business owners.

The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force was created in 1991 and has worked to develop and implement policy for San José. While the Task Force has successfully reduced gang-related crimes over the years, new ideas and tactics must be introduced. Some gang detectives have estimated the total gang members in San José in the thousands, perhaps as many as 4000 or more. With respect to juveniles who were brought to Juvenile Hall in the year 2003 alone, 928 declared themselves to be gang-involved. That was more than double the number from 2002, supporting reports that gang-related activity is on the increase. The city needs to have a better system of calculating the amount of gang activity, so that we can more accurately measure the effectiveness of programs.